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LETTER DATED 4 JUNE 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 3 June 1997 from Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning violations of Iraq's airspace committed by the United States U-2 spy plane on the pretext of carrying out an aerial survey for the Special Commission. The Minister urges that Iraqi aircraft should be used instead of foreign aircraft in the work of the Special Commission in order to exclude any possibility of such aircraft being used for purposes prejudicial to Iraq's sovereignty and security.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 3 June 1997 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council

We refer to our letter dated 20 March 1997 addressed to the President of the Security Council concerning the violation of Iraq's airspace by the United States U-2 spy plane on the pretext of carrying out an aerial survey for the Special Commission (S/1997/253, annex).

We should like to inform you that this aircraft, which takes off from Saudi territory, has continued its violations of Iraq's airspace in violation of the country's sovereignty and security. As at the end of April 1997 it had made 355 overflights, for a total flight time of 1,571 hours and 36 minutes, since its first overflight in August 1991.

The facts that have come to light since this aircraft was first brought into use, which are set forth in the above letter, and the ill repute the aircraft has acquired from its past espionage activities in various parts of the world make it incumbent upon the United Nations to re-examine the question of using an aircraft that is being employed by the United States of America in a coercive manner to violate Iraq's airspace and to spy on Iraq for purposes other than those of the Special Commission. The declared policy of this hostile country is to conspire to change the national political regime in Iraq, as has been confirmed in successive statements by United States officials and most recently in the remarks made on 27 May 1997 by Bruce O. Riedel, Special Adviser to the United States President and Senior Director for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs at the National Security Council. Such policies are, of course, totally incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations as they relate to the sovereignty of all Member States and non-[intervention in their internal affairs.

We condemn these unjustified violations of our airspace and take this opportunity to reaffirm the request we have consistently made in the 120 letters we have addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on this matter, namely that Iraqi aircraft should be used instead of foreign aircraft in the work of the Special Commission in order to exclude any possibility of such aircraft being used for purposes prejudicial to Iraq's sovereignty and security.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq